

Visit
of
**Manchester & Cambridge
Friends**
to
Congo Yearly Meeting
February/March 2008

CEEACO



Martin Gilbraith and Hazel Shellens visited **CEEACO** (Community of Evangelical Churches of the Friends in the Congo) on behalf of Cambridge and Manchester Area Quaker Meetings, in February/March 2008.

We flew to Burundi



We flew to **Bujumbura**, capital of Burundi, and then travelled around the northern tip of Lake Tanganyika to **Uvira**, just 25km from Bujumbura in **South Kivu** province of the **Democratic Republic of Congo**

Uvira Friends' Peace Centre (FPC)



The Friends Peace Centre (FPC) in Uvira, largely financed by three contributions by the Cambridge Area Meeting over recent years, but yet to be finished

Sewing workshop



A women's group at the FPC learn to use six sewing machines as an income generation activity

Literacy classroom



Women also attend **literacy classes** at the FPC

The seminar room



The seminar room of the Friends Peace Centre

Mkoko receives laptop



Mkoko Boseka, Legal Representative of CEEACO, accepts a laptop computer on behalf of the FPC donated by Manchester Area meeting .

He also accepted a digital camera donated by Cambridge Area Meeting.

View from Uvira FPC



The FPC is on the edge of Uvira next to this family compound, on a hill overlooking the town and the lake beyond

Uvira main street



The **main street** of Uvira - the only surfaced road we travelled on within Congo

On the road to Abeka



The **national highway** south from Uvira along the lake shore (seen here travelling north)

Abeka, where CEEACO's headquarters are located, is 45km south from Uvira

Push starting the car



The battery of the CEEACO **land cruiser** was such that the car needed a push to start every time - which is fine if you have parked facing down a slope for that purpose, but not so great when you stall while fording a small stream

The Abeka mission house



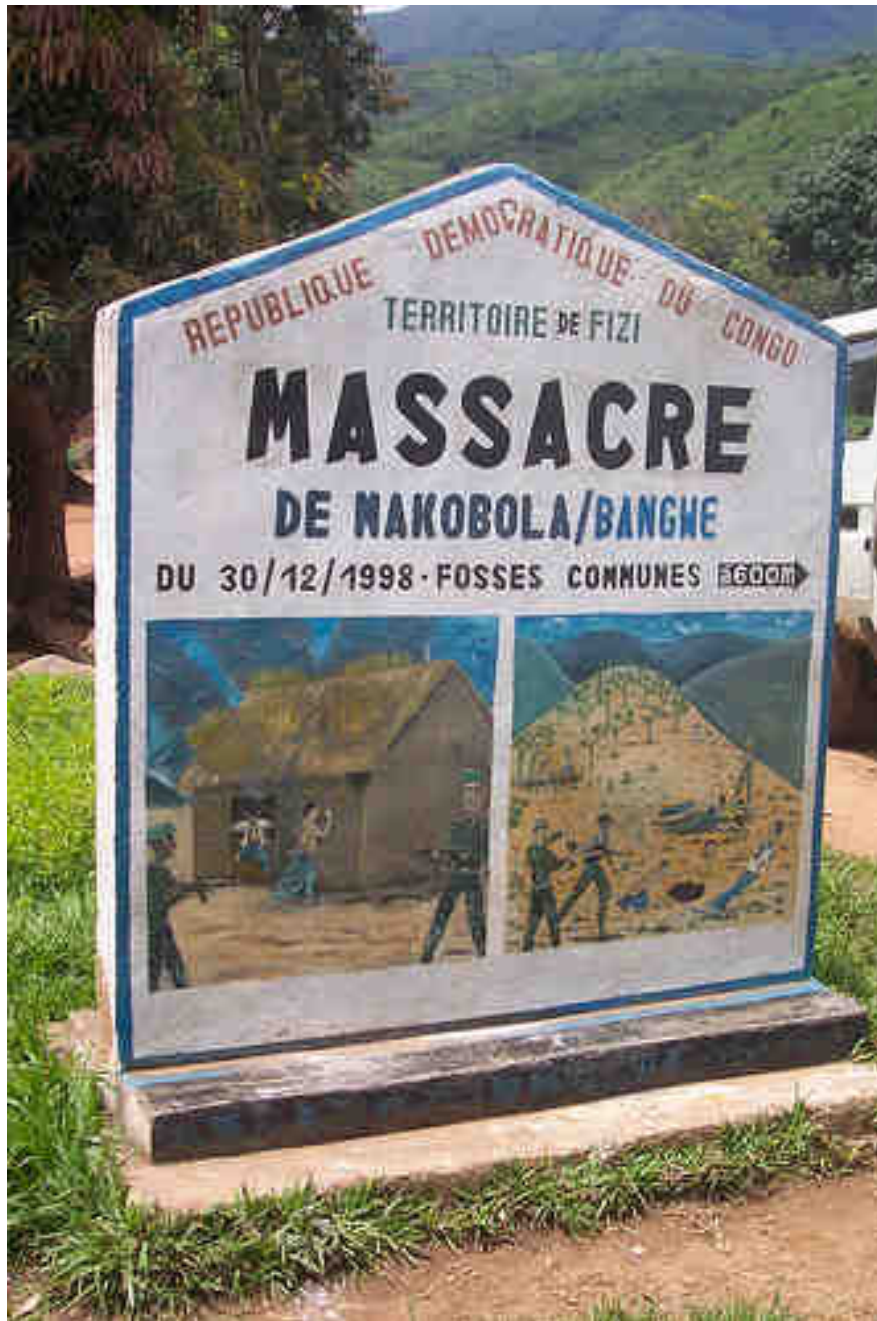
The **CEEACO headquarters** in Abeka - the former home of the first Quaker missionaries in the Congo, Calvin & Twila Coday, who lived here from 1992-1993

A field in Abeka



One of the many cultivated fields within the large parcel of land owned by **CEEACO** in Abeka, site of the mission house, church, hospital and other projects

Makabola road sign



Makabola village, half way between Uvira and Abeka, was the site of a **massacre** of over 700 women and children during the war in 1998, which began in this area. This was just one of many atrocities during the war, but memorialised as a symbol to remember them by.

Makabla school listening room



The school at Makabola provides space for one of the "**listening rooms**" run by CEEACO to provide counselling for the traumatised survivors of such atrocities, both adults and children

Makabola orphan girl reading her poem



25 **orphans** of the massacre at Makabola have their school fees paid by CEEACO, and also benefit from other support.

One of the orphans here reads a poem she has written of her experience

A Makabola massacre survivor tells her story



An adult **survivor** of the massacre tells the story of how she alone escaped after the Mai Mai rebels burned the house in which she and others had been locked

A Makabola orphan girl writes to Manchester children



One of the orphan girls, badly burned in the massacre, writes a reply to the messages Martin delivered from **children at Manchester** Local Meeting along with friendship bracelets they had made

TCPG road sign in Abeka



The listening rooms and support for orphans at Makabola and elsewhere are active outreach programmes of CEEACO's envisaged **Trauma Clinic and Peace Garden (TCPG)**, to be built on the lake shore at Abeka. Although not yet built, there is already a sign at the main road of Abeka.

Dr Etando Mkoko (right) is the TCPG's volunteer Director

Bricks in Abeka



Bricks for the **TCPG** have been made and fired here, between the main road and the site

TCPG brick laying



The **foundations** for the TCPG in Abeka were laid some years ago, with stones and sand gathered from the nearby area by members of the local community, but as yet there has not been sufficient funding to build further

Nonetheless, Hazel was invited to lay the **first bricks** on the foundations, as a symbol that construction has begun

Friends' guest house in Abeka



On the main street of Abeka, another CEEACO plot of land has a **guest house**, nearly complete.

If funds can be secured to finish this, CEEACO will begin to use this to accommodate the **TCPG** until it's larger building can be completed on the lake shore

GLTC foundations



Adjacent to the site for the new Church, foundations have been already been laid for a **Great Lakes Theological College**, largely financed by the American Great Lakes Initiative

Theology class



Until that building is ready, theology classes are held at the nearby Women's Forum building, built originally by the Codays and refurbished with funding from an American women's group after it was badly damaged during the war. Pastor Manasseh Kisopa here teaches a class on Quaker history and theology.

Theology library in Abeka



Pastor **Mwenebuka Lusungu** with the GLTC library, currently in a small room of the Women's Forum building

Abeka hospital team



Also just down the hill from the mission station is the Abeka **hospital** run by CEEACO.

The hospital staff team here is led by Dr **Etando Mukoko** (3rd from right) and **M'sato Lubungula Dem's** (2nd from right)

Maternity patient



A new mother with her baby in the
maternity ward

Abeka hospital medicine store



Dr. Etando shows Hazel the hospital's meagre supplies of **medicine**, many of the bottles almost empty.

He is seeking funding for a stock of medicine that can be sold to patients at a surplus to generate some funds to pay the medical staff, rather than charging for treatment.

Abeka hospital lab



The hospital's **laboratory** can test for HIV among other things

Abeka feeding room



Opposite the hospital is a room built in the traditional round style, for feeding of **malnourished children** and orphans, and mothers who are unable to breastfeed.

The room is also used for meetings

The children sing songs of peace



Each child is served a portion of special formula maize porridge - before eating, they learn to sing songs of peace

A boy eating his porridge



The feeding programme is funded by occasional small donations from **American Friends**. When there are no funds there is no feeding.

After they had finished eating the read a message to the children of Manchester meeting

Abeka tree planting team



The CEEACO land in Abeka is also the site of a new **reforestation** programme led by FPC Programmes Co-ordinator **Binwa Mkoko** (front), with the help of three local schoolboys

Abeka tree nursery



1200 tree seedlings have been grown, ready to plant after just 6 months.

The project was initiated by an individual donation of just **20 Euros**, which paid for plastic sheeting used to hold the soil for each seedling. Other materials and labour were contributed locally in-kind.

Martin planting a seedling



Martin helps to plant the first of the **seedlings**.

Many trees were destroyed during the war, and much of the high level of sexual violence in the area occurs when women are forced to search farther into the hills for **firewood**. The new trees will provide firewood nearer to the village, as well as shade, food and other benefits

The women sing



A Women's Yearly Meeting, and quarterly, monthly and local meetings, operate in tandem with the mainstream meetings.

The women welcomed us with a song

Women's Yearly Meeting committee



Hazel with members of the **Women's Yearly meeting**, in front of the Abeka field cultivated by widows as an income generating activity

Uvira Meeting for Worship



Pastor Mwenembuka Lusungu,
CEEACO Vice Legal Representative,
delivers a sermon at Uvira Meeting for
Worship on Sunday morning.

The meeting also includes much
singing

Uvira meeting schoolhouse



Uvira local meeting is held in a classroom in this UNICEF-funded state school, but a collection at the meeting we attended raised another \$120 on top of the \$1200 already raised toward building a dedicated church building